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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 645

committee reported the bill to General File with committee amendments attached. The bill has been considered previously, as were the committee amendments. At that time an amendment to the committee amendments from Senator Brashear, Schrock, Baker, and Raikes was adopted. We are now considering AM1351, by Senator Connealy, as an amendment to the committee amendments. (Legislative Journal page 1336.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Senator Brashear, would you give the body a review of what is contained in LB 645, please?

SPEAKER BRASHEAR: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. To summarize, LB 645, as it is now amended, enacts a prohibition on all public entities, which would be state agencies and political subdivisions, from providing telecommunication services, including broadband and Internet service provision, which is called ISP, Internet service provider services, on a retail basis; that is, providing services directly to consumers. All such entities have disavowed any interest or intent to engage in providing those services. For instance, the Nebraska League of Municipalities, the Nebraska Association of County Officials, the Nebraska Power Association have said they do not want to do that. The bill, as amended now, preserves the ability of all public entities to use telecommunications services for internal use related to the public service of that entity. So public power suppliers could use it for the purposes of including meter reading, power supply, monitoring, and other issues...similar uses. Municipalities could use it for purposes including police and fire protection, library services, and internal communication. Provision of Internet services by a library, where the library does not act as the Internet service provider, the ISP, are not threatened by this bill. As amended, the bill would enact a prohibition on public entities, other than public power suppliers, from providing telecommunications services on a wholesale basis; that is, providing infrastructure to others who will use it to provide services to consumers. There are no public entities, other than public power suppliers, that possess infrastructure that can be used to provide telecommunications services to consumers. For other entities to construct